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DOCTOR



ROBERT MACDONALD



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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS



"I love you"

[See page 138]

Illustrated

THE HERR DOCTOR

By

ROBERT MACDONALD

Author of "A Princess and a Woman," "In the
Reign of Boris," "Her Ladyship," etc.

Illustrations by W. E. MEARS



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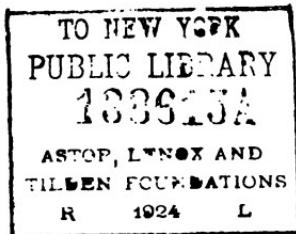
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. A DOCTOR SUCH AS RUMOR HAS HIM	7
II. A DOCTOR AS HE IS	26
III. IN WHICH THE DOCTOR FORGETS HIMSELF	39
IV. IN WHICH SEVERAL EMBARRASS- ING THINGS OCCUR	58
V. IN WHICH A GIRL FINDS HERSELF IN LOVE	78
VI. IN WHICH THE GIRL PRECIPI- TATES MATTERS	97
VII. IN WHICH THE GIRL WINS . . .	110
VIII. IN WHICH A DESIRABLE CONSUM- MATION OCCURS	132

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
"I love you"	<i>Frontispiece</i>
It was plainly to be seen by now that a railway journey was beyond Miss Baldwin	II
Frau Kisch	13
"Let me give you a cup of coffee," the Herr Doctor said	35
"Stay on the balcony," said the invalid .	45
She went down on the floor, striking her head	51
She found that domestic woman engaged in bleaching her store of linen . . .	54
She slept a good deal	72
Up-stairs in her room that night Elizabeth had looked at her brilliant reflection in the glass	85
She also set the very prettiest hat she owned on her head	105
Hanging over the very top parapet of the tall tower was a girl in a white gown	107
She turned around and cried as hard as she could on his shoulder	123



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I

A Doctor Such as Rumor Has Him



THE elder lady sat down on the grass by the side of the road and groaned. She had been moving more and more slowly for the last ten minutes, and her niece had been looking at her with an anxiety which now broke out into words.

"Aunt Connie," she said, with all the severity of accusing youth, "you are ill, and there isn't any use in saying you are not. You can not walk to the station. I am going back to the Schloss and ask that woman if she can not get us rooms for the night."

Miss Baldwin tried to arise. "In that

The Herr Doctor

place? Never! It is simply a damp hole. This is merely mortal thought, I tell you. There isn't one thing the matter with me. And stop staring there like that!" tartly. "You have calamity written all over you. Oh, *why* did I ever come here, and leave Pixler in Cassel! *Why* do you want to hunt up every old ruin you hear of, and then want to explore the country all around every ruin you hear of?" Miss Baldwin's temper was getting the best of her usual good nature under the influence of twinges of rheumatic gout.

"Well, Aunt Connie, whether it is mortal thought or mortal rheumatism, you must have a doctor."

"Elizabeth Baldwin," said her aunt, solemnly, from the side of the road, "never let me hear you speak of such a person!"

Miss Baldwin was short and stout.

As Rumor Has Him

Under ordinary circumstances great dignity of carriage and decision of manner caused the casual observer to lose sight of this ; but, with one foot held up from the ground, a rather inelegant pose as to her head and shoulders, and her face as red as the berries on the *Vogelbaum* in whose shade she sat, her infirmities were visible. Tears of pain stood in her eyes even while she insisted there was nothing whatever the matter.

Elizabeth hesitated for an instant, and then she ran back up the grassy slope and around the ruined wall of the old fortress of Bergheim, destroyed in the Thirty Years' War. It was a long way, and she heard her aunt's voice calling after her angrily, but she kept on. She was a tall girl, and she was a little frightened, and she covered the ground in a way that would have astonished her acquaintances.

The Herr Doctor

The woman who lived in the part of the Schloss that had not gone to ruin had looked like a sensible good soul. They certainly could not go on to-night. It would be midnight before they reached Cassel, for they had missed one train. She had been selfish to insist upon her aunt stopping here. And yet she had wanted to see the tower. In any case, she would get a carriage, a cart—something.

The woman in the Schloss was so very sorry, but she was a servant of the Fürst. The Fürst had said that if she received lodgers he would remove her and her husband. But her husband had a cart, a beautiful new cart, and he would take the lady to the station.

"Bring it quickly, then," Elizabeth ordered, and went skimming away down the slope to where she had left her aunt. When she arrived Miss Baldwin was



It was plainly to be seen by
now that a railway journey
was beyond Miss Baldwin

The Herr Doctor

lying back in a dead faint, her face ashen in hue. There was a little brook near by, one of those little German streams that slip through the fields so shyly that they would never be noticed if the Emperor did not build enormous stone and iron bridges over them all along his cannon roads. Elizabeth, in a panic now, filled her sailor hat with water, and had brought her aunt back to a realization of her agonies, and further declarations that there was nothing at all the matter with her, by the time the woman's husband came with the beautiful new cart, designed for carrying cabbages to market. It was plainly to be seen by now that a railway journey was beyond Miss Baldwin, and so was a drive of any distance.

"Isn't there a guest-house near, one that isn't part of a stable?" Elizabeth asked, in despair. The man tried to think. Then he perked up. *Frau Kisch,*

As Rumor Has Him

the widow of the tile-maker, had taken a lodger once. She had a house without a stable attached. (Tho why these crazy English were hunting a house without a stable attached was more than he could understand. Even the Schloss had one.)

To Frau Kisch's they went, and, after various questionings and explanations, and considerable doubt, they were taken into a stuffy room with two short German beds, and Miss Baldwin was put into one of them, still trying to maintain her pretence of being perfectly well.

"Wait," Elizabeth said to her charioteer. "Where is a doctor?" turning to Frau Kisch.

Frau Kisch looked at the man and he looked back.



Frau Kisch

The Herr Doctor

"What is it?" Elizabeth asked, impatiently.

"There was a doctor, yes, but—he was said—well, there were queer tales—and anyway he couldn't be very wise, for he was a peasant, born right in the next village. To be sure, the Graf had employed him, and let him live in his house in his absence, but—" Evidently Frau Kisch thought little of the man's skill when he had been born in the next village.

"Go for him," Elizabeth said. Unused to illness, never having heard her aunt complain, she felt that she must have counsel from some source.

When she went back to her aunt she found that lady in a fever of indignation at being brought there and put to bed. Unable to move without agony, she still insisted that there was nothing whatever

As Rumor Has Him

the matter, and that she should have been taken on to Cassel.

"Who is this person you have sent for?" she asked.

As they had stopped only for the day, they had no baggage. It had all gone on to Cassel. Miss Baldwin was attired in a voluminous *Nachtkleid* which belonged to the long-armed Frau Kisch, and which she had brought out with misgiving, and only after Elizabeth had paid for their room in advance.

"He must be a good doctor," Elizabeth said. "He is the Graf's physician, and lives in the Graf's house. You remember, that walled house beyond the village." Her aunt could not speak German, and she trusted that she would never discover that her doctor was a peasant. Like most Americans, Miss Baldwin found any foreigner who was

The Herr Doctor

not titled or a member of a titled family below consideration.

"It makes no difference to me," Miss Baldwin said, firmly; "I shall not have him in this room. I shall tell him exactly what I think of his profession."

"That will be quite impossible because he does not speak English. Please, Aunt Connie, you must get well. How can we go on to St. Petersburg if you are ill?"

"I never felt better in my life," said Miss Baldwin. And then, overcome by the nervous strain and the terrible twinges of pain, she began to sob hysterically, and in the midst of her sobs she insisted that she was being killed by the heresy and disbelief of her niece.

Elizabeth went out into the kitchen to find Frau Kisch, and to ask how near they were to a telegraph office. She

As Rumor Has Him

would wire to the consul in Cassel and ask him to send the best physician there down to them.

"What sort of a doctor is this one?" she asked Frau Kisch again. Could she trust him even to-night? A peasant! Horrors! he might be a quack, like some country doctors she had heard of in America!

Frau Kisch went into confidential particulars. In reality he was a terrible man. Not one of the people around, except of course the Graf, would have him. The villagers would die respectfully. He cut up dead people. There was a terrible story of his having actually been in prison once for violating a dead body against the orders of the dead man's family. That was when he was a student. He had actually cut up his own wife when she was dead. To be sure, after that he had had a marble bust of

The Herr Doctor

her made. She was twenty years his senior, and he was said to play tunes on his flute to it. As tho that would make up for having been cut up !

He was a peasant, and how could he be a good doctor? (The Germans believe in class.) The old Graf had sent him to the University. That was why the Graf had him when he was ill. He probably paid him nothing. It was on the old debt.

Elizabeth grew a little sick at the thought of a man who could dissect his own wife. Truly he must be a peasant. Her heart sank as she thought of her aunt. It was hardly likely that she would allow so rough and tactless a man to come near her, and there was no telegraph office near by. She could not send a message before to-morrow.

Elizabeth went back to her aunt, and passed the front door in Frau Kisch's

As Rumor Has Him

little passage just as it was pushed open and a stranger, whom she knew must be the doctor, walked in.

It was growing dusk by now, and she hastened on to light the candles Frau Kisch had brought in.

"The doctor is here, Aunt Connie," she said, pleadingly.

"Well, he may go away again. I will not be oppressed by quackery."

For an instant the girl felt he must understand, but his face in the flare of the candles reassured her. At the sight of him, so different from what she had expected, a sense of relief too great came over her and choked her. He was a tall young man, broad of shoulder and thin of waist, more like a German officer than a peasant doctor. His smooth-shaven face was square at the chin, and his nose had something of the eagle contour of Von Moltke's. Indeed, with his thick, fair

The Herr Doctor

hair parted on the side, he looked something as that warrior might have appeared in his youth.

He drew off his gloves as he came in, and went immediately to the bedside and began asking questions, Elizabeth interpreting. These Miss Baldwin steadfastly refused to pay any attention to. She closed her eyes and lay back on the fat pillows of Frau Kisch, the ruffles of that lady's nightgown about her, her face scarlet and her lips compressed, quite unconscious of the ridiculousness of her appearance. The doctor turned an inquiring eye upon Elizabeth.

She tried to think what she could say. She wondered if a German, born a peasant, and of course having no friends with fashionable fads, had ever heard of faith cures. She wondered how she could explain Christian Science to a German scientist who had dissected his own

As Rumor Has Him

wife in his zeal for knowledge. She could try, however.

"My aunt is never ill," she finally said. "She considers it wicked to be ill, or say she is ill. She was taken with pain in her foot to-day, after we had explored the old fortifications. She fainted."

The doctor lifted the damask cover to the bed and gently took Miss Baldwin's foot into his hand. As he touched it she gave an involuntary scream, and then shut her lips again and tried to draw it away. Then she began to sob with the pain of her effort.

"Elizabeth," she cried, "you are killing me! Send this fool away. He makes his living out of the weakness and fal-la-cy—" She couldn't say any more. The doctor was going over the joints of that foot as if it were a watch and he was the watchmaker. He put it back on

The Herr Doctor

the bed and took Miss Baldwin's wrist. She tried to draw that away, but she might as well have tried to take it away from a steel gyve. Then out of his pocket came a little instrument case, the long sleeve of the Frau's nightgown was pushed up, and a tiny needle went into the arm under it. The sobs grew fewer and presently they ceased. The doctor continued to stand by the bedside, and Elizabeth watched him. Then when his patient slept he turned toward her.

"Do you know how long your aunt has been suffering like this?" he asked.

"Only to-day," answered Elizabeth, confidently.

"More probably only a year. She has been trying to pretend that she was not ill, has eaten what she wanted, walked when it caused her terrible agony, and has succeeded in bringing about a very serious state of affairs. It is quite

As Rumor Has Him

impossible for her to travel for two weeks at the very least. She must not put that foot to the ground, nor have any vibration such as she would have on a railway journey. Lameness might result."

"But," said Elizabeth, "my aunt is accustomed to luxuries. How can she stay here?"

The doctor thought a moment. "I am living in a house whose owner is away. There is a housekeeper. It is comfortable, and near here. I will arrange to move your aunt there tomorrow. Can you send for your luggage? I suppose it is near here."

"It is in Cassel with our maid."

The doctor hesitated again. "Has the maid been with your aunt long?"

"Fifteen years!"

"Leave her in Cassel." The order was given as though he were directing hot bandages placed on the foot. "I

The Herr Doctor

will telegraph for a nurse from the Lutheran Sisterhood. They are excellent women. I suppose your aunt can speak German?"

"No."

"So much the better. It will be impossible for her to advance her theories. I will get a nurse who can not speak English. I will not send any medicine tonight; I will bring some and give it to her in the morning. May I take your telegram?"

"I thought—" Elizabeth hesitated and blushed. "I thought I would telegraph for—"

"For a physician. By all means. There is an excellent man in Cassel. His name is Boldt. His address is 17 Brunnenstrasse."

But when Elizabeth had written her telegram to Pixler, telling her to send the baggage but to stay in Cassel, she stop-

As Rumor Has Him

ped. "I think," she said, handing over the one, "that perhaps Dr. Boldt would —speak English." And then they smiled a smile of sympathy at each other.

When the Herr Doctor went out he encountered Frau Kisch in the little entry, papered in marbled paper as tho it had been "done up" by a New England paper-hanger. There was a short and what was evidently a satisfactory interview between them. When she bowed him out, her "Herr Doctor" was more respectful than one would have expected her to give to a man with so terrible a reputation. The Herr Doctor sprang onto his horse, which had been waiting, and cantered down the road with a seat in his saddle which did not seem that of a peasant.



II

A Doctor as He Is



THE next afternoon found them installed in the Graf's house without either lady being very well aware of how she arrived there. Miss Baldwin had been still stupefied by the drug of the night before, and had made no serious objection to being carried out to a roomy carriage in the Herr Doctor's arms; then, after an interval, by the same means, into an enormous bedroom jutting out into the balcony overlooking a rose garden, and a little lake with a rustic bridge, where swans turned themselves upside down in a search for

As He Is

weeds. It felt more like home than anything she had seen for six months. And the blue-clad Lutheran Sister had a kind face and deft fingers.

Elizabeth felt responsibility fairly dropping from her shoulders. Her own room was next to her aunt's and shared the balcony. She was glad for a moment that her aunt couldn't see that balcony. She knew that it would add another stone to the heap of her little spites against Germany. It was a new addition to a charming old house, and it was quaintly painted in vines hung with red and green grapes in which very fat and very dimpled cupids disported themselves.

By the time their baggage arrived with an insulting letter from Pixler, announcing her determination to sail for America by the next steamer, as evidently her services were no longer desired, Miss

The Herr Doctor

Baldwin had returned to her animosity to all doctors as creators of disease, and particular viciousness toward the one whom she declared was killing her by his mortal thought and awkward practises. His entrance was sufficient for Miss Baldwin to begin to address her niece in vigorous English. It seemed to Elizabeth that he must be able to understand that he was being talked about, so emphatic and particular was her aunt. While the rheumatic foot was at rest it was in comparative comfort, swathed in lotions and bandages which the doctor had put on with his own hands, under the admiring eyes of the Sister and the scoffing remarks of the sufferer. But she let the bandages remain in their place. The Sister seemed to be smilingly unconscious that this patient was in any way different from any other patient with rheumatic gout, that being a dis-

As He Is

ease which does not conduce to amiability of temper.

One of her aunt's remarks sent Elizabeth down-stairs on a search for their host. He was a peasant, and a German peasant. It was altogether unlikely that he had lost one characteristic of his kind. Miss Baldwin had asked her if she were satisfied now that she had placed them in the clutches of a man who might murder them for the money they had on their persons, and who certainly would never have taken them into the house unless he had known who they were and wished to extract an enormous fee from them. In the doctor's presence, and while he was handling her foot, Elizabeth had been directed to write to the consul in Cassel, and to their lawyer in New York, that they might be forewarned against extortion. It was a great relief to Miss Baldwin, in the midst of the first bodily pain

The Herr Doctor

she had given up to for years, to be able to be as unpleasant as possible, with the certainty that the person concerned did not understand a word she said.

Elizabeth, descending on her mission, was directed toward "the study of the Herr Doctor" by the smiling house-keeper, whose brown wig, with a piece of white serpentine braid sewed down the middle of it for a "part," could not materially reduce her wholesomeness. She knocked at the study door, and when no summons came the house-keeper hustled up and opened it for her, and told her to go in, as the Herr Doctor would presently arrive.

Elizabeth could not repress a little giggle when she saw the bust of the doctor's wife in the middle of the green table. It had evidently been made by one of the marble-cutters who make tomb-

As He Is

stones and the heads which adorn the walls of many villas in Germany. It was of a woman at least fifty, and a trifle inclined to flesh. Her fat cheeks and chin drooped, and most ludicrous touch of all, on her nose were a pair of marble spectacles, with gilt wires over the ears. All around was a litter of medical journals and books, a chart, a student lamp, and yes, here by the lamp, the flute. Elizabeth tried to imagine this eagle-faced young man tootling away to the spectacled image of his wife—his wife—whom he had—it was too horrible! She was ashamed of herself because she found it so gruesomely funny. With her hands up to her mouth she turned her back on the bust of the Frau Doctor to find the doctor himself standing facing her in the door. Her face flushed crimson. “I was—I was”—in sheer embarrassment, she was saying what she would

The Herr Doctor

have bitten her tongue out rather than say—"I was admiring your—your wife."

"It is a good likeness," he said, gravely. She saw herself in a mirror over the old sideboard, and she wanted to die because she looked such a fool. She, Elizabeth Baldwin, noted for her tact, her society manner, her *aplomb* upon all occasions!

"I came down," she went on, hurriedly, "to ask about the arrangements here. I know this isn't your house and you are more than good to take us in. Will you tell me what I shall pay you for it? I thought it best to arrange it—" She felt lame of speech in the face of his coolness. She wondered if he would think that they expected him to be extortionate. Anyway, he might be. She didn't care. Only she was going to offer money before it was asked.

As He Is

"Certainly," he answered. He might have been a shopkeeper giving the price of ribbon he sold every day. "If you were in a hotel as good as this you would pay about twenty-five marks a day in this locality. That is for your rooms alone. For the pension, you may pay Frau Kopf. She caters for me for five marks a day, including service. My price for visits is ten marks. I shall see your aunt every day until she is better. Is that satisfactory?"

"Perfectly," Elizabeth said, meekly.
"I judge that there is no reason for you to economize especially? In case there is—"

"Oh, no! oh, no!" she said, hastily. Really this peasant was going to offer to reduce his account. She made up her mind that she would tip every servant about the place until she ruined them, and that she would send this insolent

The Herr Doctor

man an extra fee that would make him open his eyes.

The rooks were coming home across the yellow sky, and making a great noise in the row of horse-chestnuts in the garden. The housekeeper came in with the coffee tray, and she had put an extra cup on it. She put it down in the oriel window through which all the scents of the garden came.

"Let me give you a cup of coffee," the Herr Doctor said, and he began pouring it out, holding the cream-pitcher in his left hand and letting the streams mingle as they fell into the cup. "I don't ask if you take cream. I have my coffee made so strong that it is undrinkable without. Two lumps?" He held them up in the tongs, and she couldn't get away. She found herself sitting on the old green velvet cushions in the window, drinking her coffee, and listen-

As He Is

ing to the Herr Doctor talk, and meekly answering questions about her aunt — actually laughing with him over her aunt's theories on mortal thought.

"It does a great deal of good—Christian Science," he said, evidently knowing all about it. "The trouble is, your aunt really has a disease which was fast becoming chronic. As soon as she is a little better you must take her to some baths near here. That will complete her cure."

He told an anecdote of a man he knew who had been miraculously cured. It was a story full of subtleties of humor, and it was well told and unhackneyed.

"Let me give you a cup of coffee," the Herr Doctor said



The Herr Doctor

Here was evidently a man who did not need to have a professional humorist come along and describe life to him before he saw its ridiculousness. He must have learned a great deal from the Graf—how to dress, for instance. His ties and his hats and his shoes were remarkable in any German. Once, when they first landed, Elizabeth had remarked that there must be a destiny which shaped the ends of German men. A hatter and shoemaker seemed to have had nothing to do with it.

The coffee was perfect, and sandwiches of Gervaise cheese and Bar-le-Duc jelly made with white French bread accompanied it instead of the thick, buttery *Kaffee-kuchen* which was usual. But, then, that might be the Graf's housekeeping.

The china was old Dresden and the silver of the sort to make a collector's heart ache.

As He Is

The human mind is not all critic. What young girl, who hasn't spoken to a man above a servant or a railway employee for three months, could resist the temptation to talk to a handsome, gay, well-mannered young man who amused her? Elizabeth, running over with vitality, and liking for her kind, forgot everything except the pleasant old-world room, and the sense of enjoyment in a natural companion, until he reminded her. He turned up the squat silver cream-jug, and looked at its contents in dissatisfaction.

"I must get another cow. I was brought up on a farm. I know all about cows."

Elizabeth came back to realities. She had a vision of the village where he was born. It was called Hundsdorf, which means Dogtown in plain English. It was a collection of farm laborer's huts,

The Herr Doctor

huddled in with cow stables. No man denied being brother to the ox there. The ox was the pampered member of the family. And "he knew all about cows!" She arose to go—and standing there on the table was the bust of the fat old wife with the marble spectacles, gilded by the late sun. She hated herself for having broken bread with such a horrible, vulgar creature. He was a monster! She would never speak to him again! How could she have so forgotten herself!

And then—on the dark stairway—she said to herself, "He *must* have married her when he was *very* young and *very* ignorant."



III

In Which the Doctor Forgets Himself



MISS CONSTANCE BALDWIN was a lady with a mind of her own. She came by it honestly, as we say in the United States of America. On one side her ancestors were of that little band who set foot on Plymouth Rock, and set it down hard in a determination to have civil and religious liberty and a monopoly of it. On the other side of the house she was a lineal descendant of Jack Leslie, of Virginia. If you do not know the great episode of that gentleman with the light manner and the iron will, none of your kin

The Herr Doctor

were born south of the Mason and Dixon line.

Anybody weak enough to suppose Miss Baldwin conquered by the opinions of others little knew her—at least, it was in these terms that she expressed herself to her niece. Coldly she received the ministrations of the nurse, and remarked that it was rather farcical to attempt to cure a delusion. It might have seemed to even a casual observer that a foot of a fine scarlet, swollen to twice its natural size, was convincing ; but Miss Baldwin lay back among the thick German pillows and read a book serenely while it was being dressed, and refused to see anything wrong with it. The doctor she declined to notice at all, carrying on a conversation with her niece during his visits, and looking through him as tho ignorance of the English language condemned a man to invisibility as well as oblivion.

Forgets Himself

She searched her mind for the things which would most annoy him if he could understand, and took the satisfaction in saying them that a child has in beating a doll.

At last she managed to send one shaft which found a home, altho not in the target she had intended.

"I hope, Elizabeth," she said, in her martyr-like tones, "that when your silly infatuation begins to wane you will give me warning, that I may arrange our journey."

Now Miss Baldwin, like most of us, had picked up the first loose word at hand. "Infatuation" fitted her idea as well as our words usually cover our thoughts. Perhaps she was not more surprised than Elizabeth when a furious blush went over that young woman's face.

Miss Baldwin was not lacking in acuteness. Miss Baldwin had been a girl

The Herr Doctor

herself—and for a long time. I have often thought that mothers of daughters have not one-half the perspicacity of your unmarried chaperon. Any spinster will inform you that the mothers of daughters have usually married their first and only lover, and one has yet to see a maiden lady who has not been fairly persecuted with suitors. They acknowledge it themselves. They know all the tricks.

When she saw that blush she was filled with consternation. She had been looking at her niece, but she let her eyes roam toward her doctor, and she emitted a hollow groan of anguish. The nurse looked up with a murmur of German words expressing sympathy, and the doctor gave another direction, but Miss Baldwin's hurt was too deep for hot applications, and what her eyes saw gave her no comfort. That her doctor was handsome she had vaguely known be-

Forgets Himself

fore. He might have been that, and might too have had (it was the absence which she would have noted) the general appearance of gentlemanly habit. But she recognized in him that *aura* of manly force which is, after all, the only dangerous charm a man can own. Quickly she reviewed the situation.

Of course, by this time, she pondered, he knew exactly who they were. The Baldwin family and fortune made a household story in every land, according to Miss Constance's fancy, fostered by the "Sunday pages" of her native newspapers. He knew, doubtless, when he brought them there that he had under his roof a beauty and an heiress whose position in her native land gave her the *entrée* to any court. People talk about the Queen of England's power to create social eligibility, but women have kissed even that royal hand and been snubbed

The Herr Doctor

subsequently in Boston and New York. But who ever heard of an American society woman who did not have things her own way anywhere else? Which is exactly as it should be.

Miss Constance's mind took a way illuminated by that blush. Of course Elizabeth was not a fool, but, then, neither was Nature. Miss Constance knew that there was no situation that cynical old schemer so dearly loves as the one she had here at her hand, given a beautiful girl, an attractive young man, and propinquity. Fire and tow were no more irresponsible.

Miss Baldwin groaned again in anguish and disgust, and when her niece offered a word of sympathy she was sent from the room. "Stay on the balcony," said the invalid, viciously, "until this ignorant clown leaves the room."

Miss Elizabeth left the room with the



"Stay on the balcony,"
said the invalid

The Herr Doctor

color still in her cheeks, and as soon as the nurse and doctor had disappeared she came back and opened the attack.

"Aunt Constance," she said, "we are here through Dr. Goertz's kindness, and I do not think it kind to say such insulting things in his presence."

"We are paying for our accommodations, I believe?"

"Yes, we are, but—"

"And very well, too. As I understand from the very meager details you have chosen to give me of this person, it isn't even his own house. He is turning a pretty penny renting another man's house."

"If you have that feeling, I think we should go."

"I am quite ready. We are simply staying here because you insisted upon it. I suppose we can reach Cassel by morning."

Forgets Himself

"We can not go to Cassel until you are better, but we can go back to Frau Kisch."

Miss Baldwin loved her comfort almost as much as she loved her niece. "May I ask why?"

"Because — because — " Elizabeth stumbled and hated herself for it. "You think Dr. Goertz is not behaving properly—"

"I have never yet found an innkeeper who did behave properly, but that is no reason why I should live in a hut. You are conspiring with this vulgar villager (Miss Baldwin thought that sounded well) to keep me here, but I tell you that your evil thoughts will be overcome by the *truth*; I shall leave here to-morrow."

"Until then I wish you would not call him names to his face. He may know some English. He is a university

The Herr Doctor

man. That he is a farmer's son is nothing against him. So are plenty of Americans."

"Oh," said Miss Baldwin, "he *is* a peasant, then? A *Bauer!*" She spoke the word as tho it were cattle. "I suspected as much! Surely you need not have subjected me to the humiliation of being attended by a village quack."

"Dr. Goertz is an educated scientist," said her niece.

"The idea!" ejaculated her aunt. "Who ever heard of an educated German who could not speak English?" And, indeed, Americans are the only people who consider themselves educated when they can correctly speak one tongue.

For answer Elizabeth took a letter from the bag on her belt and began to read. It was from the consul in Cassel, and was in answer to her first letter after

Forgets Himself

the accident. In it he congratulated them upon being near Dr. Goertz, who was considered by scientific men to be one of the great physicians; certainly the best in that part of the country. He was eccentric and seldom took patients. Never would he leave home for one. He was the protégé of the Graf von Hilders, an officer in the Emperor's Guard, and independent through a fortune he had inherited. Here the consul, who was an inveterate gossip, and had, indeed, won his position as consul by writing Washington chit-chat for a New York newspaper, went into humorous details concerning the marriage of the young doctor to the widow of a dealer in *Speck*, and how he was said to play the flute to her image. All this Elizabeth skipped, judging that her aunt was in no mood for humor.

Sometimes, however, the consul said,

The Herr Doctor

Dr. Goertz would take from the universities a pupil whom he considered unusually promising. These were often Americans, and always poor men. It was by this means he was disseminating his great knowledge obtained through daring research. Elizabeth read this part of the letter with triumph.

"A crank," was the calm summing up of her aunt. "I leave here tomorrow."

When Elizabeth had gone out angry, and twice angry because she was once, Miss Baldwin sat up in bed and looked about her. The nurse was still downstairs. Slowly, gingerly, and with compressed lips, she put one foot over the side of the high bed, and followed it by the other. She tried her utmost to appear unconcerned. She even gave a look about the room as if she hadn't quite made up her mind which

Forgets Himself

corner of it she would first visit. Then, with a courage equal to a soldier's when he faces the cannon's mouth, she slipped down until her weight rested on her foot. She tottered, gasping, gave an involuntary cry, and went down on the floor, striking her head, and twisting one foot under her heavy body. If she had been a second later she would have fallen into the arms of the Herr Doctor, who sprang from the doorway.

"My dear lady," he said, in excellent English, "how imprudent. You must not leave your bed." He took her up carefully and laid her back as tho she had been a child. He looked at her again, saw that she was unconscious, and rang the bell furiously.



*She went down on the floor,
striking her head*

The Herr Doctor

ously for the nurse. He did not see Miss Baldwin's astonished niece standing in the balcony window.

"I have heard that the Baldwins would kill themselves to get their own way, and now I believe it," was the remark Elizabeth heard him make to himself.

A Hessian peasant doctor and "the Baldwins!" She started into the room and then thought better of it. She went through her own room and down-stairs. On the way she met the Lutheran Sister flying to answer the bell, and she half stopped her and then let her go. There was no use in offering questionings to a conscience like the one behind that square face. If the Sister knew anything she would not tell it, or, telling, would tell that she had told.

Miss Elizabeth Baldwin had now but one wish in life. It was to discover how

Forgets Himself

always intimidates those who haven't the wit to resent it, "not the Herr Doctor. Where is Dr. Goertz, whom you sent for that night my aunt was taken ill? You deceived me."

"But," said the Frau, "he made me promise. I promised I would not tell. Dr. Goertz had gone to visit his parents. And he said that he knew how to treat the American lady. And who would better know? Oh, the joy to find that the aunt of the gracious Fräulein was not to be cut up! Perhaps in my new house! It was the blessing of Heaven! And I suppose he wanted a patient with a rich person's sickness. Of course he could seldom have a rich person's sickness. But how dared Frau Kopf tell?"

"Do you think," said Elizabeth, "that one American wouldn't know another? Of course I knew he was no German."

The Herr Doctor

She said it with so much contempt, as that village of Hundsdorf retreated into the background, as the fat lady of the marble bust became impersonal, that she might have hurt Frau Kisch's feelings if that person had not been seemingly lost in thought.

"I suppose," she went on, "he is a pupil of Dr. Goertz?"

"Yes," said Frau Kisch.

"What is his name?"

"I promised I would not tell. Would it be possible for the gracious Fräulein not to let the Herr Doctor discover that she had betrayed anything?"

Miss Elizabeth Baldwin's eyes were gay, and she was in a condition to promise anything. What did his name amount to? Anyway, she could surprise it out of him in a day or two. It would be a game for that period. Suddenly on her way home she sat down by the road-

Forgets Himself

side and laughed, and then she put her hands over her face. Those terrible things her aunt had said. But they served him right.

And how could she ever have thought that he was anything else but an American? And how could she have allowed herself to think that he—he—had ever been the husband of the fat lady of the marble bust!

She stopped and took the consul's letter out of her pocket again and reread it. "Some young men of great talent as pupils!" she read. "But always poor." Pooh! What was poverty?



IV

In Which Several Embarrassing Things Occur

THE first thing Miss Elizabeth Baldwin did the next day was to relieve her aunt's mind concerning the possibility of the heiress of the Baldwin millions allying herself with a German peasant.

She might have been seized with compassion in any case when she saw the poor lady, realizing for the first time that she was really ill, but still too stubborn to confess it, with a piteous look of helplessness in her white face, from which her hair was put back plainly instead of in its usual conventional curls. It meant actual defeat to let the hair-dressing go.

Several Embarrassing Things

Elizabeth kept fairly quiet until the moment she had been waiting for—the entrance of the Herr Doctor upon his morning visit. Then, arrayed in the prettiest gown she owned, with a big hat tilted over her dancing eyes, she came in to the conference. She and the doctor had had the inevitable daily meetings of two people who live in the same house. (The law of attraction is so subtle that two ships lying in a dead calm on the broad bosom of the ocean will drift together from miles away.) They had never had coffee together again, because Elizabeth had kept away from the library with its bust and the flute. She had resolutely looked the other way when she passed the door. But one must sometimes take the air of the garden.

This morning, while Miss Baldwin lay, all her ready words gone, looking anx-

The Herr Doctor

iously from her gaily attired niece to the grave young man who was asking Sister Evalina questions, Elizabeth opened the consul's letter and read some of the parts she had omitted the day before.

"Aunt Connie," she said, "you *must* get up and come down-stairs. This place is *too* delicious. The Graf almost never comes here, and he has practically given the place up to his guest." (She gave a sidelong look of reference to the Herr Doctor.) "In the library he has everything his own way and on the table is a marble bust of his wife."

"The Graf's wife?"

"No, dearest. The doctor's wife. This gentleman's wife. His sweet little wife. Of course, I wouldn't dare speak of it, only, you know, he can not understand one word of English."

Miss Baldwin had a bewildered look. It seemed to her that she must have

Several Embarrassing Things

been very ill and rather silly yesterday. Surely she had thought that Elizabeth was taking a fancy to this man. And he had a wife!

"By the way, tho," said Elizabeth, with a piece of information which she had heard from the housekeeper by chance, "the Graf's mother was an American."

"What is his name?" asked Miss Baldwin, excitedly.

"Von Hilders." Her niece had no sooner said the name than Miss Baldwin struck her hand against her forehead.

"And I never thought of it! Of course, they have a dozen great places—of course. Mary Lawrence—she was your father's sweetheart when he was a boy. They quarreled about some trivial little thing, and neither would give in, and the Count von Hilders met her in Washington and married her. It was a

The Herr Doctor

great match. She hadn't a cent—and a dozen brothers. They were a wild lot. Clever as they could be, but without the ability to make money. Mary took care of them all. Her husband was one of the richest nobles in Europe. And to think that I am in her son's house! He is an officer too, of course. I wonder if he ever comes here?" The bubble of imagination ran ahead of Miss Constance. "I suppose he continues to do something for all those Lawrences. It looks as tho he was taking care of more than his kin, by this peasant being here in his house," and she cast her old-time vicious glance at her physician.

"Ah!" thought Elizabeth. Miss Baldwin did not notice it, but at the first mention of the name of Lawrence, Elizabeth saw the color come into the self-contained doctor's face. "It hasn't taken an hour to surprise it out of him. Dr.

Several Embarrassing Things

Lawrence, nephew of my father's old sweetheart, the Graf's cousin! My friend, it hasn't needed Frau Kisch to tell me your name." She had to turn her back to keep her aunt from seeing her smiles.

That lady was excited.

"Is Graf von Hilders married?"

"I don't know. Let me tell you about his funny guest. He is a peasant."

"You told me that yesterday," her aunt said. "Ask this man here if Graf von Hilders is married."

"Now, Aunt Constance, what earthly difference can it make?"

"This difference. I find myself in the house of a man who is almost a relation. He might have been my nephew."

"In that case this wouldn't be his house. Listen to the consul's letter. Now, can you imagine this nice, clean-looking young man sitting there by the

The Herr Doctor

side of the bed, as the husband of a fat old lady who sold bacon? He really don't look it, now, does he?"

"Where is his wife?" said Miss Baldwin, bewildered. "I never saw her. She isn't—Elizabeth, this man's wife isn't that ridiculous housekeeper?"

"Frau Kopf? Oh, *no*. She wasn't half so gay as Frau Kopf. And she is dead. And he has her marble bust on the library table. It is a dream. It has gilt wire spectacles on its flat marble nose, and when he gets sentimental he plays tunes on the flute to it. The consul has written us all about it."

"A peasant will do anything. They are all fools, for all their cleverness sometimes," said Miss Baldwin, lucidly. "Anybody can look at this man and *see* that he is of the lowest classes."

"Oh, I don't know," said Elizabeth, looking at him critically. "I think he

Several Embarrassing Things

has rather a nice face. Now, look at his nose, Aunt Constance. It seems to me that his nose is more or less aristocratic. And his eyes are clear and good. To be sure, he looks a simple, frank soul. I think you are prejudiced, Aunt Constance. And I am sure that it shows a good heart to play on the flute to his poor dead wife."

"I haven't heard any flute-playing since I have been here," said Miss Constance, peevishly.

"No more have I," said her niece. "I hope we are not diverting his mind."

Miss Constance had acquired in the past half hour an idea so brilliant that all former fears had left her, the last remnant of them washed away by Elizabeth's new flippancy concerning the doctor. She hardly gave her fears of yesterday a thought, and, if she did, it was

The Herr Doctor

to consider them a fancy of her illness. In the new plans which went rushing through her brain, she was only too ready to sacrifice her belief in Christian Science and everything else on the altar of her devotion to her niece's settlement in life. What more perfect, more romantic than the present situation if only the Graf was unmarried? She began composing in her mind the letter she would write him. She, his mother's old friend, was his involuntary guest, under the care of his protégé. She would be kind to that protégé. Anybody could see that he was a good doctor.

What more natural than that the Graf would come to visit his little Hessian Schloss while they were there? And then—there was no more brilliant match in Europe than Von Hilders. She would send for an "Almanach de Gotha" at once and find out all about him. But

Several Embarrassing Things

she must know if he was married. She simply could not wait.

"Elizabeth," she said, "ask this man if his master is married."

"I will," said Elizabeth, sweetly ; and then, turning, she spoke to the doctor in excellent German. "My aunt wishes to know if it will be possible for her to have a wheeled chair and go into the garden to-morrow?" she said. Inside her mind she said: "He shall see, at any rate, that I am not a party to Aunt Connie's schemes. I don't care to know whether the Count von Hilders has a wife or not."

"Not to-morrow, but the day after if she continues to improve. The sprain may take away some of the inflammation." And, after bowing to the two ladies, he departed.

"He says he does not know; he never saw her," he heard Elizabeth repeat.

The Herr Doctor

She lifted her voice for that purpose.

Miss Baldwin's recovery would have been fairly rapid now, except that it was retarded by an invisible complication. She had made up her mind to see the Graf, and to see him in his own house if diplomacy could compass it. She sent to Cassel for an "*Almanach de Gotha*," and, as the only one she could get was in the German language, she also sent for a set of German lesson books, and devoted hours to the study of the language. To her surprise, she found it remarkably easy. To be sure, neither the nurse nor *Frau Kopf* could understand one word she said, but the *Herr Doctor* had no such difficulty. It made no difference to him that her sentences were literal translations of English sentences, that all her verbs were in the infinitive mood, that she did not know that any word had a

Several Embarrassing Things

gender, and that all her g's were soft. Now that Elizabeth spent half her day laughing at him, and she realized how impossible her sick fancies had been, Miss Baldwin grew to have a patronizing fondness for the Herr Doctor. She even taught him a few English words. Sometimes Elizabeth assisted her at this pastime, and told him that his pronunciation was very good. She told him that some day he might need it in his practise. "But I understand from the consul at Cassel," she said, "that you do not care for practise, that you are always going to bury yourself here in this village to study."

"Hardly that. But I prefer study to practise. I like to see a disease now and then, however. Your aunt's interests me."

"He really is intelligent," Miss Baldwin said, admiringly. "I don't

The Herr Doctor

wonder they took him from his native hut."

They were in the garden. The Schloss had been built on the ruins of a feudal fortification, and a watch-tower rose at one corner, and all around the place was a thick stone wall twenty feet high—remnant of the days when a nobleman had serfs in Germany. It gave the garden much the air of being a large room. It was like a stage setting, with its little temples and lakes and the low hanging trees over the deep, green grass in which the *Pfingstblumen* were beginning to come up. Nobody knows why this delicate, crocus-like flower is given the name of Whitsuntide when it blooms in September, but nobody complains. Miss Baldwin had found it a delight since she had been taken out, and had indeed professed herself delighted with everything about the place and the

Several Embarrassing Things

country. She was beginning mentally to adopt it.

She had discovered long ago from the Almanach that Graf von Hilders was indeed the son of her old friend, that he was twenty-seven, an officer in the Emperor's Guard, and unmarried. He had a sister who was a year or two younger and was the wife of a nobleman over in eastern Prussia. Miss Baldwin took it as a good omen that the Graf's name had Richard among the Wilhelms and Victors and Ernsts which strung his name across the page. She called Elizabeth's attention to it. Richard was her father's name. In a beam of happiness Miss Baldwin had written letters to both the brother and sister Von Hilders. She carried that Almanach about with her. It was an adjunct of her wheel-chair, and it now lay piled with flowers on her lap while she slept.

The Herr Doctor

Miss Baldwin's sleep could hardly be called peaceful, but her slumberous noises took the form of heavy sighs instead of ill-bred snoring. Furthermore, as she insisted, when she was awake, upon having every spoken sentence translated, nobody disturbed her. She slept a good deal, and by this time had no more thought

of leaving her niece alone with the doctor than if he had been the footman. She saw in Elizabeth the future Countess von Hilders. No man had ever resisted Elizabeth yet, and, while young girls often pretend to be indifferent to their settlement in life,



She slept a good deal

Several Embarrassing Things

Miss Baldwin noted that her niece made no motion to go away from the Schloss or expressed any impatience over the delay. Of course, the young doctor might have a hopeless passion for Elizabeth, but that was his lookout. Some things are impossible. A romantic young man is one thing. The widower of an elderly lady who had dealt in bacon was another. So Miss Baldwin slept.

"Have you never thought of going to America?" Elizabeth asked, after they had discussed everything else, coming every step nearer to the personal.

"Often," answered the doctor. "Tell me something about it. Is the life there at all like the life here? I have heard that the American women are very different."

"In what way?"

"That they demanded everything and gave nothing. That is so different from

The Herr Doctor

the German women. They give everything."

"And get nothing?"

"By no means. A German is very domestic. He loves his home. He may be a little selfish in always wanting his wife there, but somehow it seems to me that if she were my wife I should want her to want to be there."

A delicate color shone through Elizabeth's cheek, a little tanned from long days in the garden.

"American women are human," she said, softly.

"When they marry Germans they seem very happy. Or so I have been told," he added, hastily. "I never knew but one."

"And she?"

"She was very happy." He spoke reverently. "She was devoted to her husband and children. She gave her life to

Several Embarrassing Things

them. And her husband worshiped her. When she died it killed her husband. He died of a broken heart a few weeks later."

"But that is not unlike American women," said Elizabeth, eagerly. "They are always like that when they are appreciated. But I think that woman would probably have been happier married to one of her own countrymen. I think it is a mistake, really, for a woman to marry outside her own land. If you had known this woman you speak of very well, you would have probably discovered that there were times when she thought so, too."

"Never, I am sure."

"German men can hardly appreciate American women—their freedom, their delight in everything which makes life brilliant. We hear," she said, mischievously, wondering how this American

The Herr Doctor

was going to keep up his farce, "that you Germans only expect a woman to cook. Of course, most American women learn to cook, but their husbands do not know nor care whether they do or not."

"This woman I speak of couldn't cook, but she had her daughter taught housekeeping, altho she was going to be a princess."

"Is it the Graf's mother of whom you speak?"

"Of the Countess von Hilders, yes."

"But," said Elizabeth, eagerly, "that was a love match—a romance. She was a poor girl." She could have bitten the words—but they were out.

The Herr Doctor lifted his eyebrows.
"Are rich girls, then, so unlovely?"

Before she could answer, her aroused aunt asked her to go to the house on an errand. Miss Baldwin had the little, fat, brown, German dictionary open in her

Several Embarrassing Things

hand. One word, "*lieben*," had seemed to be dominating the late conversation. She had looked it up.

After her niece had departed Miss Baldwin delivered herself of one of her German sentences. She had learned what "*engaged*" was, by no dictionary but by observation, and she would let this young man know that her niece was not for him.

"*Das Fräulein ist besetzt*," was her remark.



V

In Which a Girl Finds Herself in Love

MISS BALDWIN's hopes received such encouragement during the next week that she felt herself a diplomat with the keenness to arrange affairs of state. Indeed, I am not sure that she did not see herself with some such future ahead of her. She casually mentioned that the Graf von Waldersee's wife was an American who was said to have great influence at the Berlin court. "Naturally, she would have," said Miss Constance, complacently. "American women are a power." Nobody knows what the fancy can do.

A Girl in Love

It may be that in those days Miss Baldwin saw herself giving advice to the Mailed Gauntlet himself. I know that she thought he needed advice upon some subjects—such as American Genealogies, for example. She thought somebody ought to tell him that some Americans he had noticed were not in society.

It was the Graf von Hilders and the Princess von Less, his sister on the Baltic, who were responsible for her jubilation. They each sent a prompt answer to her letter, saying that they had heard of the Baldwin family all their lives, and that they would be more than pleased to make the acquaintance of their mother's old friends. In the letter of the princess was a note of almost eagerness. It sent the short upper lip of Miss Elizabeth into a curl. An heiress of good position early learns that she is valued as a friend by the relatives of marriageable

The Herr Doctor

men. The Princess von Less wrote that she had intended coming to Hesse during the Homburg season, and that she would make her visit take her to their old home. It had been years since she had visited it. Her brother's scientific tastes had made him use it as a sort of laboratory, she believed, and it had been practically turned over to his protégé, Dr. Goertz. "That wonderfully clever peasant, whose work (my brother says) may give the Hilders family some real claim upon history for having encouraged it."

The letter of the Graf came from Berlin, but was so much later than that of his sister that Elizabeth suggested to her aunt that it had followed a request. It lacked nothing in cordiality, hoping that the ladies were comfortable in his house and that Dr. Goertz made a good host. "It would be unfortunate," the Graf

A Girl in Love

wrote, "that Goertz had never learned English, if he were in any way companionable. You tell me that he has been a most excellent physician. He is very enthusiastic. But I suppose you have already discovered that he is a peasant—a fact you would instantly recognize."

"There!" said Miss Baldwin, holding the letter out to her niece and almost under the chin of the doctor. "There! I told you we were making too much of this man!"

Miss Baldwin's manner varied almost hour by hour. Sometimes the doctor's readiness to understand her use of a foreign tongue flattered her into considering him remarkable. Again she hesitated over having any social intercourse with a doctor whose social position was a thing of no recognition.

Miss Baldwin's snobbishness was of

The Herr Doctor

the frankest. She made no attempt to disguise it to herself or any one else. It seemed to her to be mere common sense. The theories of the social democrats that are sometimes supposed to be incorporated in the Constitution, and to form an integral part of our social system, were absolutely outside Miss Baldwin's existence. She had never so much as heard of them. If she ever had, she would be convinced that all those who held such ideas were people who "never could be anybody, and tried to bring others down to their own level." There is no aristocrat on earth more convinced of the divine right of "family" than your really **well-born American.**

They spent most of their day in the garden. Miss Baldwin had let her theories concerning "the truth" slip from her. She was one of those women who forget (it might be said one of the

A Girl in Love

sex which forgets) the plans of yesterday in the dreams of to-day. The much-talked-about "mystery of woman," which sages have given up as unsolvable, has its heart in this trait. How can a prophet tell what a woman will do to-morrow, when to-morrow, with its emergencies, has not arrived? The only thing which can be predicted is that the woman will adjust herself to them and have a new set of ideas to fit that adjustment. The Creator, who made her weak, clothed her with adaptability.

Miss Baldwin gave herself up to illness and incapability with great serenity of temper, and plainly showed that it was going to be impossible to move her until after the Homburg season opened anyway. Altho the Graf had made no mention of visiting Hesse, Miss Baldwin trusted to his sister and events.

She considered that she had finally

The Herr Doctor

settled Dr. Goertz and his aspirations (if he had ever had any), and this was confirmed when he announced his intention of going away.

This announcement followed rather fast upon the Graf's letter. For some days before that, Elizabeth had noticed that there was some constraint upon him. It came after that day in the garden. The next time she had seen him he had been "different."

Up-stairs in her own room that night Elizabeth had looked at her brilliant reflection in the little glass. The candles at the side illumined her face, and the shadows accented the sweetness that always underlay the gaiety which was her character.

"He's a poor young man of talent," she said to the reflected image, "but—I'm dead in love with him, and I don't really care how soon he knows it!" Then



Up-stairs in her room that night
Elizabeth had looked at her
brilliant reflection in the glass

The Herr Doctor

she blushed at herself and laughed. They say that when a girl is truly in love she always doubts that her love is returned, and is consequently unhappy. But that is another of the fashionable fallacies. A girl in love is usually so taken up with her own state that she gives no thought to that of anybody else. She must first grow accustomed to having all her nerves (which she, dear child, calls her "soul") in a tremor ; to having the very air about one certain person charged with electricity, which gives her a succession of shocks—shocks which she can hardly make up her mind to like.

Some sensitive natures flee from the author of this first stage of tremor, and by their going tell all the world their trouble. But Elizabeth was not one of these. She was of the new type. Nobody could imagine her, like some Clariissa, swooning at the sight of the loved

A Girl in Love

one. Her nerves were strong with outdoor air and poised through a fine realization of her own value. A kind of providence had spared her the timidities of body or mind, and, too, had given her some of the iron-willed mastery of events which had made her father a ruler of men and his times.

She gave little concern to the opening of the Homburg season and the possible coming of the Von Hilders, brother and sister—except that she suspected that the Herr Doctor would find it necessary to go before the coming of his titled relatives put him back into his own character. Elizabeth smiled as she thought of the difficulties that would be encountered when he must let her aunt know that he understood English. Evidently he had made up his mind to flee from the wrath to come.

And that was exactly what Elizabeth

The Herr Doctor

had made up her mind that he should not do. That her aunt had been able or had dared to batter down the imaginary wall of language and tell him that she was engaged had never entered her mind at all.

Miss Baldwin, altho she still kept to her wheel-chair, and vowed that she was unable to travel, with "the truth" put aside until she had sufficient leisure to play with fads and no plans to be upset by them, made no objection to the doctor's going. Of course, he was a peasant, and of course Elizabeth was not for such as he, but there was no need in his being there. Even Miss Baldwin was obliged to concede that it would be an unusual dispensation if the Graf turned out to be half so good to look at as the doctor. And comparisons that incline the wrong way are odious.

One afternoon (the doctor usually

A Girl in Love

made his visits in the garden) Miss Baldwin had an idea.

"Elizabeth," she said to her niece, "ask this man what sort of a looking person the Graf is." The words were no sooner out of her mouth than she regretted them. Of course, while he was in duty bound to praise his patron, he would hardly speak of him as a paragon to a young girl. Miss Baldwin felt that her curiosity had flown away with her judgment, and the result justified her. "Certainly," said Elizabeth, and then turned to the doctor with the innocent face which she assumed when playing that little game for his confusion. "Dr. Goertz" (she always gave him the name in full), "have you anywhere about the house a photograph of a particularly stupid and silly looking young man?"

The doctor thought a moment.

"There is only one photograph in

The Herr Doctor

the house. I consider it, while not exactly handsome, a serious-minded, reliable-looking face. It is that of the Graf."

"Oh," says Elizabeth.

"He says," she translated to her aunt, "that the Graf is a perfect num-skull. He knows nothing but to ride a horse, and play, as all the German officers do. He is homely and awkward, and altogether disagreeable."

"Well," cried Miss Baldwin, "this doctor is the most ungrateful, malicious person I ever heard of! He must be a socialist!" The poor lady was truly scandalized. "To think of this creature, this common peasant, living here in Richard's"—she gave a little "*ahem*" after the Christian name—"very house and talking about him in that fashion! That shows perfectly how the lower classes hate those above them. I shall

A Girl in Love

certainly take occasion to tell his master as soon as he returns." To all of which tirade Elizabeth listened amiably, and the doctor in the manner in which one listens to a tongue he does not understand. "Oh, you hypocrite!" Elizabeth whispered to herself. "You delightful hypocrite! For all the rest of your life you are going to be called a peasant and made fun of. And *how* cross Aunt Connie will be when she finds she has called a man a peasant who is an American and quite as well born as she is."

"I suppose," Elizabeth said to the doctor, in her easy German, "that the Graf himself thinks he is handsome and all things delightful, for all his serious mindedness. I have never seen a German officer who did not."

The doctor hesitated, and in his hesitation Elizabeth had her second fear. Could it be possible that he had none of

The Herr Doctor

the American sense of humor, for all that talk of his the first day in the study? Was he one of those people who think of surface valuations? Could he be mistaking her aunt's silly class prejudice for a judgment of himself? Her face flushed at the thought.

"I suppose none of us," he said, "can see ourselves as others see us. That sounds trite, but nobody has said it better. Men probably know less about themselves than women. They are less accustomed to self-analysis. A man thinks he is one thing, and goes through his whole life laying his plans according to what he considers his own capacities and possibilities. That is probably the root of all the lives which are what we call "spoiled." It might be a good thing for a man to see himself in an unbiased fashion once. He might be better able to judge himself."

A Girl in Love

"Nonsense!" cried Elizabeth, sharply. "A man should have the highest ideal of his own powers. A man can do anything which it is in his brain to dream of doing. Understand: there is nothing, *nothing*, material or spiritual, which is beyond any man. A man who is a real man with a brave soul may achieve anything." Her enthusiasm ran away with her. She was so determined that he should not be frightened away. There ran through her mind the thought of her wealth, and a sudden wish, not that it were lost, because she fully realized what it could do, and all she meant to do with it, but a wish that he might think it was lost. She had an instant sympathy with those romantic girls in novels who wanted to be loved for themselves alone. She would have liked to grasp at any of their silly subterfuges for pretending poverty. But the Baldwin mil-

The Herr Doctor

lions were too firm a rock for her puny lies to batter down.

The young man looked at her with an expression he could no more keep out of his eyes than he could their color. It set every vein in Elizabeth's body to bounding. We may all talk about honor and its ideals, but when a man is in love he can't keep it out of some expression. Fortunate is he if he can control his tongue.

"But suppose," he said, "that a man has set his heart on something which belongs to another—to which he has no right? It seems to me that he can best show his bravery by giving up all hope of it."

"Not at all," said Elizabeth. Like all women, her ethics disappeared in the personal. ("He is thinking of Aunt Connie's silly notions about the Graf," she thought. "He is clever enough to see

A Girl in Love

them.'') "A man has a right to whatever he can get. His first obligation is to himself. And he is a coward if he does not try for what he wants."

"You go back to feudalism," the doctor said, lightly, altho it must be confessed he had a look as tho he would like to agree with her. But the word gave a new clew to the illogical Elizabeth. That look of his had excited her. She felt herself trembling. In this, her first real love affair (how disgustingly silly and stupid the other men had been!) she realized that her love was not complete until it was met by its own kind. Its mate had come out to meet it, and she trembled and was confused at the clash.

"Feudalism!" she cried with scorn. "I detest it. This country is full of it. It is no place for an American. How American women marry German lords of

The Herr Doctor

this soil I can not imagine. They must give up their birthright to do it!" At least, she would settle his mind on the question of the Graf at once and forever.



VI

In Which the Girl Precipitates Matters



LIZABETH lived in a dream of plans the next day or two. And it is not too much to say that some of them were rather wild. They ranged from instructing her trustees to find some way suddenly to enrich this young man, such as founding a great hospital and putting him at the head of it, to becoming dangerously ill and keeping him there to attend her. The only thing, she told herself, which kept her from carrying out the last plan was her belief in his infallibility of judgment. He would know at once that

The Herr Doctor

there was nothing at all the matter with her, and would be certain to tell her so.

There had, of course, been no words on the subject of his departure, but Elizabeth perfectly understood that the doctor's preparations for instant going were made. Every day she dreaded the good-bys. If he went now without even a word, how was she ever to see him again? She couldn't very well follow him about Germany into the little university towns where her fancy took him. She told herself that she would gladly do this, until he learned sense enough to tell her that he was in love with her—which seems superfluous, as she already knew it. With all the strength of her independent young womanhood she battered against the conventions which made her wait.

Now it is a fact in human nature—and if the psychologists and social scientists

Precipitating Matters

have not noted it they are not up to their work—that no sooner do we begin to call a thing unnecessary and in the road, than we begin to try to find some way to outwit it. Failing that, we ride at it full tilt.

In these summer days, in the quiet little garden, a drama has been playing itself, and it was nearing its inevitable third act. The coming of the Princess von Less precipitated matters.

Miss Baldwin arose one morning, and was carried with groans and other expressions of helplessness to her chair. It was manifest to everybody that she could not walk and most certainly could not travel.

"Aunt Constance," Elizabeth said, "do you think you are well enough for the doctor to leave you?" Her solicitation was sweet and meek. It seemed to her that her aunt's illness ought to be

The Herr Doctor

made to work both ways. If it kept them there it ought to keep the doctor as well.

Miss Baldwin was cold at the suggestion, and thought she was quite well enough to get along with only the nurse. That conscientious woman, when she was asked, declared the patient to be perfectly well and her own intention of going back to "sick people."

"Is it a principle of the American religion of your gracious aunt," she sweetly asked, "to be well when one is ill, and ill when one is well?"

"You had better keep the doctor," Elizabeth said. But her warnings were vain. Two hours later Miss Baldwin was out of her chair, dressed, and going about in the best of health.

The postman, as usual, brought the letters into the garden, and Miss Baldwin pounced upon that from the Princess von

• Precipitating Matters

Less, whose handwriting was as characteristically American as tho she had been educated in a New York school. It contained an announcement of her coming that afternoon, said that she would stay for the night only, and begged, if Miss Baldwin's health had sufficiently recovered, that she might take both ladies on to her villa near Homburg for the season. She also mentioned that she expected to meet her brother "there," as tho he had gone before. But whether "there" meant Homburg or the Schloss, Miss Baldwin could not determine. She calmly arose from her chair, and walked into the house and told her niece. There was going to be no sort of doubt about her being able to travel.

The house was thrown into as much of an uproar as a German household may be on any other day than the semi-annual washday, for a letter had also come for

The Herr Doctor

Frau Kopf, whose wig fairly shook with her anxieties. It had been years since the princess had visited them.

"Ah," Frau Kopf cried, "it is one thing to serve the Graf, who comes so often that we are used to his ways—but, Her Highness!"

It was this exclamation that Elizabeth overheard. She had seen an excited man running a carriage out of the carriage-house on the edge of the garden, and she knew that the day had come.

"Where is the Herr Doctor?" she asked Frau Kopf, in her calmest voice. He always left a message with the house-keeper when he went away as to his return.

"He has gone to the upper farms, Fräulein," she said. "There was some trouble concerning the new barns. It was fortunate he was here. They were

Precipitating Matters

not large enough. The steward will be discharged."

Elizabeth looked at her in wonder.

"Does the Herr Doctor care for the property, then?" she asked. To her surprise, a dark red ran over Frau Kopf's face, even up to the edge of the brown wig.

"Sometimes," she said, and began making excuses and backing away.

"Does he come back by the old fortifications?"

"Yes, gracious Fräulein. It will be about three."

Elizabeth made a mental calculation. That would enable him to gather up his bags (she had seen them packed and waiting) and go before the princess arrived. She was to come at four. It was now eleven.

"I hope you will put on a respectable gown, Elizabeth," her aunt said. "That

The Herr Doctor

short skirt and shirt-waist are well enough, but do put on your white serge."

"I will," said her niece, obediently.

And, as tho she feared to forget, she put it on then. She also set the very prettiest hat she owned on her head, took a package of Suchards in her hand, and went off toward the old fortifications.

"Um—er," she said to Frau Kopf, "if my aunt wonders where I am—I may not be back to luncheon—tell her not to worry, I went up to take—a look around, at the fortifications."

The fact that not a soul in the house spoke English, and that her aunt held all her communications through her, disturbed her not at all. She knew that Frau Kopf's "Yahs" and smiles were quite capable of removing all minor anxieties, and she had, besides, reached the place when she cared not at all. She

Precipitating Matters

had one goal, and she was going—well, she was going to make a mighty effort to get a ball through it.

The old fortifications were as picturesque as any ruin in all Europe. They were made up of the remains of a feudal castle, with all its accessories. A great wall full of loopholes surrounded several acres. At every point of the compass had been erected a watch-tower, where men at arms and sentinels had waited in the romantic old days for the sight of the enemy coming over the distant plain. One of these towers remained intact, so that an adventurous spirit could climb to the very top, altho the last flight was only a wooden ladder, and ladies



*She also set the very prettiest
hat she owned on her head.*

The Herr Doctor

seldom went up there. It looked down upon the road by which the Herr Doctor would be almost certain to come from the upper farms of the Graf's domain.

He came that way that afternoon. If he hadn't, this story wouldn't have been worth the telling. He was riding along in his soldierly fashion, when a sudden shower of something fell down in the road before him. As there were no trees just here, he naturally looked up, and received a hard chocolate on his nose—a miracle of aim which was accidental. Hanging over the very top parapet of the tall tower was a girl in a white gown with at least two yards of scarlet shawl, which must have been put there for the purpose of attracting attention. It was a lonely road, not a common way, and when the figure, which the doctor instantly recognized, beckoned, there was nothing for him to do but dismount and

Precipitating Matters

come up. She might be in difficulties up there.

As there was no tree outside the wall, he drew his horse through a breach in the old wall, and tied him to a plum tree in the shade. Then he climbed the stairs.

He saw a laughing face at the square opening on top. The ladder was a little long and he had to step aside as he came up.

"You must be very athletic to have done that," he said. And then he spoke gravely: "It was a very dangerous thing to do. There hasn't been a lady up here since my sister and I—"

"Oh, have you a sister?" she said, eagerly. If he had a sister, she might



Hanging over the very top parapet
of the tall tower was a girl
in a white gown

The Herr Doctor

make her acquaintance, anyway. That was a straw in the case—she was beginning to think that maybe—her heart was beating like mad.

She was almost ready to give up—to catch at any straw.

"She is a long way from here," he said—and Elizabeth left the subject quickly.

"Does any one know you are here?" he asked. "You might have fallen at that ladder. You might—"

His face was stern.

"No one knows I am here. I did not come by the custodian's house. It was very easy," she said, volubly. And, before he could prevent, she had gone to the ladder, and started as tho she would swing round it over the abyss below. He put out a warning hand. The ladder slipped and went crashing down. They were quite alone on the top of the tower.

Precipitating Matters

Elizabeth was afraid to look up for fear he would see the fright and mischief in her eyes. When she did, it was to look into a white and frowning face.



VII

In Which the Girl Wins

FOR the first time in her life Miss Elizabeth Baldwin felt herself facing something like fear.

She wanted to cover her face with her two hands and sit down on those old stones and cry. The whole situation was so absurdly different from the neat little comedy she had so placidly planned out. She had a thousand precedents, in history, in books, and on the stage. She had actually dressed for the part. Here was the most romantic of scenes. Here was she, the beautiful young heroine, a regular princess to this poor young man.

The Girl Wins

He loved her, and he needed encouragement. She was going to give it to him fairly against his will. And then suddenly he was changed. It was into the eyes of no timid young lover she was looking. Here was a strong, determined man, who saw through her miserable little tricks. What was going to be done?

“I suppose you have contemplated the possibility of our spending the—several hours here?”

His voice was fairly icy.

“What do you mean?” she asked, furiously. She would *never*, never let him know that she had dropped that ladder on purpose. She began to believe that she hadn’t. It was an accident.

“I mean that I do not understand your ideas of sport,” he said. He was still standing facing her. His arms were folded across his chest and his mouth tightly closed. “You have done a thing

The Herr Doctor

for which I can hardly forgive you. It is useless to consider that you do not know better. You should know better. According to your American ideas, I suppose I should tell you that it is nothing, that there will be no harm to you in spending a dozen or two hours up here with me. If it had been truly an accident I might have tried that. But it was not. You threw the ladder down purposely."

"I—" began Elizabeth. But she could not tell the silly lie. The uselessness of it was too apparent. She only looked at him with the blood in her head ringing like bells.

"This is not America. This is Germany." He spoke roughly.

Suddenly Elizabeth's spirit came back to her. Her face was white and her eyes blazing. "Why don't you ask me why I did it?"

The Girl Wins

For a long instant they gazed into each others' eyes. And as Elizabeth gazed she began to exult. He was angry, furiously angry, but, with the intuition which is a woman's birthright, she saw that, after all, in the essential thing she was not wrong. In his anger was the best proof, the incontestible truth, of his love for her. She began to be glad that she had carried out her plan. She might be on the top of that tower, or on a desert island, or anywhere else with this man. She was safe. He would take care of her and take care of the consequences. And the color began to come back into her cheeks and the resentment to die out of her eyes.

"I know why you did it," he said, slowly.

Her lips parted, and a furious flush brought tears to her eyes.

"You did it out of ignorance. I had

The Herr Doctor

no idea you were so young. Nor had I any idea that you were so full of the follies of an uncultivated society. I had heard that American girls stopped at nothing in their methods of tormenting men they had reason to believe loved them, but I did not believe it of you. I suppose it is merely a proof of your innocence, your inexperience. You threw that ladder down to see what I would do, sure of yourself, your own mastery of a situation which is more than risky. I would be doing you the greatest wrong if I did not let you understand what you have done. You have, for one thing, spoiled my ideal of you."

"As if that mattered!" cried Elizabeth, while her heart fell like a hard stone.

But he went on. "As it happens, I do love you. For days I have tried to keep away from you. I love you so

The Girl Wins

much that you shall be saved the consequences of this insane folly at any cost. But first I am going to tell you that men are not so wise nor good that you may try this sort of thing often. I do not know Americans. Our training does not fit us for understanding such an act on the part of a woman."

"How dare you speak to me like that?" Elizabeth cried. "How dare you stand there and keep up that silly pretense of being Dr. Goertz? You are an American. I have known it all along. Do you think I would be here if I didn't know it? Do you think I would be on the top of this tower with—with—a disgusting *foreigner*?" She put all the scorn she knew into her words. She turned her back upon him, and went and leaned over the parapet. A puzzled change went over the young man's face. He seemed to be actually swallowing

The Herr Doctor

something. It may have been his anger. When he spoke again it was in a tone which had changed entirely. "I beg your pardon, Miss Baldwin," he said, "but from how long have you known that I was—not Dr. Goertz?"

"From the first day, almost," she said, furiously. "Do you think that *I—I* would spend the hours I have with a peasant, a creature who had married a woman old enough to be his mother, so that she would pay his bills? Did you think any American girl would do such a thing? We know the way German men think of women. We hate them."

"But," he said, "many American girls marry Germans." The whole tone of his voice was lowered, but it was not less intense.

"They do. But who are they? Girls who marry for position and title!"

The Girl Wins

"Not all of them," he said, quietly.

"What do I care whether they do or not?" She was determined to make him understand now. "Did you think that *I*—*I* would encourage a foreigner?"

"Was it any kinder 'to encourage' an American? Is it a great compliment you pay your countrymen? I hope they are all worthy of it. But I suppose even an American may have some feelings. Was it any kinder of you to put him in this position? Is the man you are to marry an American?"

"He certainly is," Miss Baldwin remarked, decisively.

"Will he understand? Will he see nothing strange in this situation? Shall you tell it to him?"

Elizabeth's emotions were running so fast that she could hardly keep pace with them, but for the instant her sense of humor came to the surface.

The Herr Doctor

"He will understand—if he isn't an idiot."

The parti-colored fields of Germany lay out before them like a map. Far away on a distant hill a flock of sheep climbed, the low sun gilding their fleece. A speck of black behind was the shepherd. The flying ants that cover the tops of these old towers took notice that the sun was getting low and began to take themselves into the crevices between the rocks. The little chill in the air and her nervousness sent a perceptible shiver over Elizabeth.

"Where is your wrap?"

"It fell down—with the ladder."

The young man went to the parapet and leaned over as tho he were looking for something. When Elizabeth turned again she found that he had taken off his coat. A little thrill of appreciation of his beauty of strength ran over her mind.

The Girl Wins

His coat and hat were on the floor, and his hands on the parapet. He turned and spoke to her in the ordinary, polite tone of every-day conversation. "When I was a boy," he said, "I climbed up this tower from the outside. I found and dug small niches between the stones. It can be no more difficult to go down than to come up, and—there is no necessity for our staying here any longer. We might miss our dinner. If you get cold, suppose you put my coat around you. I shall come up inside. It will be but a moment to get the ladder up, and you can come down."

"What!" Elizabeth said. "Climb down that wall? Indeed you will not!"

"It is nothing. I have done it," he said, lightly.

"Why will you risk your life for so silly a thing? You shall not." She had

The Herr Doctor

his arm now, and her grasp was not to be despised.

"Elizabeth," he said, and he spoke English now for the first time. "It is not a silly thing. You must let me do what I wish. I am sure of reaching the ground in safety. I *must*. If we stay here until we are found, maybe to-morrow, almost certainly not before then, the peasants will scatter the story everywhere. It will be in the newspapers. You mistake the man you are going to marry. He is human. He would never forgive you. I would do this for any woman. I love you. I would rather be dead down there than spoil your life."

"But these peasants—what do they matter? We are both Americans."

"I am not," he said. "I am a German. This is my home. They don't call me a saint. I am one of those 'dis-

The Girl Wins

gusting foreigners.' Now will you let me go?"

Involuntarily Elizabeth had loosened his arm. He vaulted lightly away from her, and was over the turret upon the narrow ledge that ran along below. He half turned to look for the foothold below. Elizabeth put her two strong hands upon his arms. "You shall listen," she said. "I do not care what you think or who you are. If you go down the side of that wall, I shall follow you. I came up here this afternoon because I knew you loved me, and I saw you weren't going to tell me so. I love you. If you kill yourself I will kill myself, too. I will not live without you. I don't care if—if you are a *Frenchman*." Then, as tho that plea must bring him, she let go and sat down on the floor, and put her hands over her eyes, and her face wrinkled up into the most

The Herr Doctor

unromantic of crying grimaces, like a little child's.

In one second he was beside her with her in his arms.

"Elizabeth," he said, "have you promised to marry another man?"

"No!—no!—no! You are too hateful to live! You are perfectly insulting, and I *hate* you!" And to prove that this was really the case, she turned around and cried as hard as she could on his shoulder.

"My dear! My dear!" he said, and patted the back of her neck, as he would comfort a child. "It was your aunt's German. She told me that you were promised."

"She meant that Graf." All of Elizabeth's high-and-mightiness had disappeared. She held on to the shoulder. "They are just a lot of fortune-hunters, and I won't see them. I'll marry you to-morrow!"



**She turned around and cried as hard
as she could on his shoulder**

The Herr Doctor

He gently drew her away from his shoulder and looked in her face. Her eyes were red, her hat was crushed, and her pretty hair in wisps over her face. They laughed like a couple of children, and fairly flew into each others' arms.

The sound of voices came up the reverberating hollow of the tower.

Elizabeth sprang away from the arms around her, and began pushing her hair and hat into shape.

"Why need they bother us?" the young man said.

"It is some one Aunt Constance has sent for me. The Princess von Less has arrived."

Her lover took her hands.

"Elizabeth," he said, "did you tell them before you left that you were coming here?"

"Yes, I did." And then: "Now you see how unjust you were. And what

The Girl Wins

horrible things you said. I knew that we should only be here a little while, and if you had behaved properly I should have told you."

"Surely, my dear Miss Baldwin, you can not climb up the tower," they heard the echoes say.

Elizabeth looked at the doctor. "Aunt Connie!"

He shrugged his shoulders. "She is quite able to come up if she wants to." He went to the opening and looked down, and then, making a cup with his hands, he called:

"We are here, but the ladder has fallen. Have one of the men bring it up."

"Is it thou?" called a gay woman's voice, evidently on the stairs. "The echoes danced the words and magnified them.

"Don't come up. Have the men bring

The Herr Doctor

the ladder." The doctor's voice was almost anxious.

"Nonsense!" answered the voice, much nearer. It had almost reached the floor below. "Why not come through the turret? Are you losing your *Kraft*?"

The Herr Doctor gave a look at Elizabeth which was half vexation and half amusement. Then he threw himself over the turret just as he had done before. Before she had time even to start she saw his hands disappear and heard him on the inside, and the sound of a greeting from the lady below. A moment later an iron ladder with steps came up, and then a tall, handsome woman appeared, followed by the doctor. He took the lady's hand with ceremony and approached Elizabeth.

"Allow me," he said, as tho he were presenting two queens, "to present my

The Girl Wins

sister, the Princess von Less, to my wife to be."

Elizabeth's head was in a whirl. She felt trapped and deluded, and she held herself furiously angry. It was fortunate that her new acquaintance found a ready excuse for her dumbness.

"I am delighted," the princess said, kissing her on the cheeks. She was a tall, clever-looking woman, with American features and style of carriage. "Is Dick showing you the domain? What a lovely unchaperoned time you have had, and how you have deceived your poor aunt! The servants told me as soon as I reached the house that both of you thought Dick was poor Goertz. But I knew better than that." She turned a laughing face to her brother. "You two have behaved abominably. Miss Baldwin is so disturbed she can hardly talk. Go down, Herr Doctor, and sat-

The Herr Doctor

isfy her, and beg her pardon. Romance is all very well, but sometimes a joke may be carried too far. Go on. We can come without any trouble. I want to talk to my new sister."

He gave a look almost of pleading toward Elizabeth. She would not meet his eyes, but stood listening to his sister with almost chilliness. That lady took it for embarrassment, and, by way of having everything over, she turned to the girl as her brother disappeared and took her hands.

" You don't know how happy I am," she said. " I have so feared that Dick was never to care for anything but his army and his scientific studies. I am so proud of him. He has worked out wonderful theories of the care of bodies of men. He has learned everything so thoroughly. Had he been placed less high, he would have made a great physi-

The Girl Wins

cian. He is so modest, and so *good*. I am so happy that his marriage is to be one that will not hamper him. Our mother was an American. She brought us up, Dick and me, much like American children. She always intended to take us there some time, but my father never found time to go, and she would not leave him. It is a sweet country about us, isn't it? She loved it because they came here when they were first married; but we lead too busy lives to be here much, and Dick has turned the estate over to Goertz. He comes here to experiment with him sometimes." She turned toward the ladder as her brother's head came up through the space. He took her down to the floor below, and then he came back for Elizabeth. She saw just under the eaves a window, with rude steps on the inner wall leading to it. An open closet of rough oak showed

The Herr Doctor

ropes, a telescope, stools, and the space for the iron ladder. The princess went on down, holding up her gown as tho its preservation was her greatest concern in life. She had married for love, herself.

"Elizabeth," he said, "forgive me."

"I *never* will," she whispered, dramatically. "When I called you back you were deceiving me. You have done nothing but trick and deceive me. How can I trust you? I shall not tell your sister—but—after we are gone, I shall write to her."

"But you can't go." He stopped on the stairs below her. "You promised to marry me to-morrow."

"I didn't promise to marry the Graf von Hilders."

"Whom *did* you promise to marry?" he asked.

She gave him one look of contempt.

The Girl Wins

and, sweeping past him, went on down the rough steps and out into the courtyard, where her aunt sat, probably the happiest woman on the continent of Europe.



VIII

In Which a Desirable Consummation Occurs



DINNER that night was a different thing. The princess had brought some of her own people, and treasures of silver and china came out on the wonderful embroidered linen. Dozens of wax lights on table and sideboard made the whole place sparkle, and the ladies were in their prettiest frocks. As for Miss Constance Baldwin, her gown was off her shoulders, her hair on the top of her head, and nowhere the least sign that such a thing as mortal illness had ever been known to her. She had made her peace with the Graf without his allowing her to be embarrassed. They had lightly skimmed

A Desirable Consummation

over all her rudeness by the pretense that during her illness and pain she had been unable to recognize anybody or know at all what she was talking about.

Elizabeth puzzled the princess. She seemed a little too stiff and shy for an American girl, but it was a fault which that astute lady felt that she could condone. At any rate, here was a girl who had certainly made no effort to entrap her brother. She had a great dignity and self-respect, and the princess, with her half-American blood, her respect for American independence, and her German appreciation of American wealth, felt that she was an acquisition. But there was no reason for her undervaluing the Von Hilders.

The princess' conversation with her brother was in bits here and there, but its effulgence of titled names fairly dazzled Miss Constance. Here, she felt, was

The Herr Doctor

the society in which she would be the happiest. She wanted to get Elizabeth away to herself and congratulate her again and again on her cleverness. She was ready to forgive everything, even the supposed fact that she had been allowed to be rude to a Graf under the supposition that he was a peasant. She was even ready to let Elizabeth sit silent at the table. She had hardly spoken at all.

When dinner was over and they went back to the drawing-room (a recent addition, opened for the princess' arrival) the two young women made the tour of the room, and the daughter of the house explained the few portraits which hung on the walls.

"Of course our great collections are in Berlin, and near Stettin," she said. "But I suppose Dick has told you all about them and shown you the photographs?"

"No," Elizabeth said.

A Desirable Consummation

His sister lifted her eyes. A fire had been lighted, and her white velvet shoes were on the fender and a cigarette in her mouth. "That is the way of lovers. I suppose you two talk of nothing but each other and all your plans. Where are you going to live?"

Elizabeth's face became crimson, and then the color went out of it. The Graf had gone out in the garden with his cigar. All at once he seemed to have become somebody else. The glow of the burning tobacco could be seen there under the trees. Elizabeth had seen it just like that last night from the room above. Tears almost came to her eyes. She felt the corners swell. She began to pity herself as one whose whole happiness had gone astray. And the keen-eyed woman of the world before her knew that something had gone wrong.

"I should suggest Berlin after a while,

The Herr Doctor

but—not now," she laughed. " You must know, my dear Elizabeth, that my brother stands very high at court. In the first place, he is one of the richest nobles in Europe, notwithstanding the fact that our mother had not a *Pfennig*. There is one of our very exalted personages whose relations are too great to mention casually, who has looked at Dick, and nobody but Dick, ever since she came out of her father's castle in her native duchy. She is young and beautiful, and it is an open secret that the court approves. If it hadn't been for you, I am not at all sure how it would have ended. That is why I am so delighted altogether over you. Honors are all very well, but I want Dick's wife to be one of ourselves. Royalty can never be that." The Princess von Less was a wise woman. She narrowed her shrewd eyes and gazed through her

A Desirable Consummation

cigarette smoke. "Now," thought she to herself, "if she is cross with Dick, I think that will set her thinking." And then she turned to Miss Baldwin and asked her sympathetic questions about Christian Science. She turned back toward Elizabeth for a moment and said: "Are your shoes too thin for the garden? I am sure Dick is wishing you would come out with him. Don't mind me." She went to the window and called: "Dick, O Dick, Elizabeth is in here boring herself to death! Come and take her!"

The Graf came under the window. He looked a little grave, but Elizabeth hated herself for a snob because all at once he had become what seemed to her the very handsomest man she had ever seen. She told herself that she never would have loved a poor unknown young man who had behaved as he had. And her heart

The Herr Doctor

told her that she was more in love with him than ever. He had become hers in that hour on the tower; that hour before she found out how he had deceived her.

"I was hoping she would care to come out. Will you come?" he asked, deferentially. She opened her mouth to refuse, and then—before she quite knew it she was through the window and in the shadow.

"Elizabeth," he said, "Elizabeth."

"It would be a great deal better for you to marry that princess," she said, incoherently.

Von Hilders started, and blessed his sister with the left hand. "Elizabeth," he said, "we have been a silly pair. I beg your pardon. I love you. You told me to-day that you loved me. Can't we forget everything else and be happy?"

"I— Yes," said Elizabeth.

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